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OF THE LOVE OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST,

And the Means of acquiring it.

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PREFACE.

AS our LORD JESUS CHRIST was the sole Object of the love of the Eternal Father from all eternity, so ought He to be our only love also. He was sent into the world by the Eternal Father expressly that He might be loved by men. In the New Testament His Father speaks but to commend this love to them. Men are pleasing to Him only so far as they bear resemblance to Jesus Christ. He loves them only inasmuch as they love Jesus Christ. Lastly, He predestines them to eternal glory only by reason of the conformity they have to Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ Himself came into the world to lead men to this love. All His thoughts,

His desires, His actions, and His sufferings, had this love for their chief aim. He declares that He came into the world for no other purpose than to kindle in the hearts of men the fire of His divine love, and that His chief desire is to see them inflamed with it. "I came to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?"—*Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?*

In all that the Holy Ghost works in our souls, He has no other aim than to teach us to know, love, and imitate our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ Himself assures us of this, when He says in the Gospel that one of the chief motives of the coming of the Holy Ghost shall be to give testimony of Him to men, and to impress the knowledge of Him on their minds, and the love of Him on their hearts—"When the Paraclete cometh, He shall give testimony of Me."

Lastly, we are Christians only inasmuch as we are united to Jesus Christ. We cannot be perfectly united to Him except by love for Him, and by that entire conformity of our hearts and minds to Him, which this love cannot fail to produce. It is thus only that we are Christians. This love then for Jesus Christ should be the only aim of our desires, the object of our thoughts, the chief occupation of our life, and the end and aim of all our cares and exertions. Sinners may make this, their aim, the imperfect should be always aspiring to it, and the perfect should be unceasingly occupied with it.

What then is the business of our life, if it is not studying, knowing, honouring, loving, and imitating Jesus? This ought to be the chief employment, the chief, or rather, the only devotion of a Christian. Other devotions, I allow, are good; but after all, they are only good in as far as they have

reference to this, from which they derive all their merit and all their virtue. This is the solid and essential devotion of Christianity. This it is which makes us true and perfect Christians. Other devotions are often works of supererogation, this is of obligation. Others often oppress us by imposing extra obligations on us, this relieves us by helping us to perform those obligations we already have. Others are means, this is their end. Others assist us towards perfection, this completes and accomplishes our perfection.

Nevertheless, we must own it with sorrow, we see multitudes at this present time in Christendom, who by an intolerable mistake, which we cannot sufficiently deplore, prefer the accessaries to the principal, the means to the end ; who entangle themselves in endless devotional practices, and neglect the devotion of devotions, namely, the devotion which we ought to have for

the Sacred Person of Jesus Christ. All those, then, who have any zeal for the glory of Jesus Christ should unite in putting an end to such an evil.

This should be the object of the zeal of preachers and the ordinary subject of their sermons; it should be one of the chief cares of those who make a profession of loving Jesus Christ. This is what Directors should aim at above all things; for they should only strive, like St. Paul, to form Jesus Christ in souls; for this is the surest, quickest, and easiest means to conduct souls in a short time to perfection. We may certainly say that many Directors have something to reproach themselves with on this score. But this is more especially true of those persons who make a particular profession of devotion, and who even aspire to the highest perfection. For, how is it, that with a number of excellent practices which they observe, with morti-

fications and austerities, sometimes even excessive, which they undertake, with the assiduous and, as it would seem, elevated prayer to which they apply themselves—how is it that they grovel all their life, scarcely advancing in virtue, sometimes shamefully bending under considerable faults, such as secret pride, and unmortified tempers and passions, so as never to succeed in acquiring to any great degree any of the evangelical virtues, such as deep humility, invariable sweetness, great contempt of the world, complete interior detachment, and a continual mortification of their tempers, senses, and passions? All this comes, doubtless, from not giving their attention sufficiently to the Sacred Person of our Lord Jesus Christ; from not sufficiently studying His Life, His Virtues, His Example, and His Precepts; from not meditating and penetrating sufficiently His Mysteries, His Greatness, His Merits, His Favours, and

the infinite obligations to Him under which we lie; from not striving to unite themselves constantly to Him by a generous and sincere love, and a perfect conformity of their hearts and minds to Him. It is to attempt to remedy a mistake which has such evil consequences, that Eight Motives are proposed in the First Part of this little work, such as seem the most suitable to inspire us with a great desire to love Jesus Christ and to unite ourselves solely to Him. But as it would be of little use to us to have this desire if we do not put it into practice, Eight Means are provided in the Second Part which may assist us in acquiring this love. In the Eighth of these Means the plan and rules of a holy Association are given, the aim and end of which is to ask continually of the Eternal Father an increase of the love and knowledge of His Son, and perfect conformity of heart and mind with Him.

The blessing which God has already given to this Means of acquiring love of Jesus Christ, the approbation of the Holy Pontiff Innocent XI. of happy memory, and the Indulgences also which he has granted to those who become members of this Association, give hopes that those who are really devout will be edified by it, will derive great fruit from so holy an exercise, and thus see the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ increase.

We may add, that those who aspire to a perfect union with Jesus Christ, will find in a separate volume, which is a continuation of this work, Interior Exercises on all the Mysteries of the Hidden and Glorious Life of our Saviour. They may use the book with profit throughout the whole year, and thus labour to clothe themselves in Jesus Christ, and transform themselves completely in Him.

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PART THE FIRST

EIGHT MOTIVES EXCITING US TO THE LOVE OF
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

MOTIVE I.

WE SHOULD LOVE JESUS CHRIST, BECAUSE
HE IS LOVEABLE.

EVERYTHING that is beautiful, and everything that is perfect, is naturally loveable. Everything that is infinitely beautiful and infinitely perfect, is therefore infinitely and necessarily loveable. Hence it follows that the Blessed, who see clearly the beauty and perfections of God, love Him so necessarily that it is out of their power to refrain from doing so. They would love Him infinitely if they were capable of an infinite love.

Were we then to study more often, were we to know more perfectly Thy perfections, O Jesus! should we not find ourselves under

a sweet obligation of loving Thee, since Thou dost contain in Thyself all perfections, created and uncreated, human and divine, spiritual, absolute and relative, and consequently all that can not only satisfy our minds and win our hearts, but even please our affections, and captivate our senses, in a word, all that can attract our love ?

Is it not, then, wonderful that in spite of so many reasons for loving Thee, we can possibly avoid doing so ? Jesus is God. He possesses, therefore, infinite beauty, infinite goodness, infinite power, holiness, wisdom, and, in a word, every perfection to an infinite degree. Thus, then, my soul, thou canst find in Him wherewith to satisfy thy desires, however vast, however ambitious they may be ; wherewith to fill that immense craving of the human heart which cannot be filled with any created or finite good. What then dost thou seek for elsewhere ?

But Jesus is also man. In taking a body and a nature like ours, He makes these beauties and perfections of His—all divine

as they are—material, sensible, adapted to our weakness, and proportioned to our faculties. How, then, can we refuse to love Jesus, or excuse ourselves from doing so, though we be ever so earthly, material, or attached to the objects of sense? For we have in Jesus, as the object of our love, something which is both divine and human, spiritual and sensible; something which can, consequently, satisfy our minds, our hearts, our reason, and our senses, and attract at the same time our veneration, our love, our admiration, and our tenderness. How comes it, then, that the effect upon us is so often different from this? What are we to think or say of this strange marvel? Only that there is something in the malice of man, and in the insensibility of his heart towards Jesus, as incomprehensible as there is in the goodness and beauty of God.

God became Man, says St. Augustine, in order that man, who is composed of two such different parts, one altogether spiritual the other altogether material, finding

in a God-Man all that was wanting to make the happiness of both his own natures, should not be obliged to divide his heart, and thereby to divide his love, between God and the creature ; but that, finding in the Humanity of Jesus a holy occupation for his affections, pleasure for his senses, satisfaction for his mind, and enough to content his heart, he might place all his joy in Him, and find his happiness in loving Him. What then ! If one touch of beauty, if the smallest trace of perfection found in a wretched creature, can dazzle our eyes, take possession of our minds, and allure our hearts with a kind of enchantment ; what strange sort of enchantment is this of which we speak, that the accumulation of every beauty and all perfections, divine and human, spiritual and material, all of which are found in Thee, most lovely Jesus, is unable to satisfy our mind, win our heart, or earn our love ? Is it madness ? or blindness ? or insensibility ? or, rather, is it not all three at once ? For, indeed, how is it conceivable that, while we can

no more help loving that which is loveable, than help seeing that which is visible, yet Jesus, Who has done everything to make Himself beloved by us, or rather, is Himself alone worthy of love, should be about the only one unloved by us! Unloved! Rather, Who is neglected, scorned, forsaken! It is this pitiable blindness which the Prophet foresaw and deplored in those touching words—"Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and ye gates thereof, be very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."* This is what happens daily, when we forsake Jesus, infinitely lovely, to run after creatures, the possession of which never contents us, and the love of which, far from making us happy, makes us miserable and even criminal.

This horrible confusion and strange insensibility which no one can comprehend,

* Jer. ii. 12, 13.

and which yet we see every day, touches to the quick those souls who are penetrated with the love of our Lord. We ourselves should bitterly lament it, if we had not ourselves a share in this insensibility. This thought, that a God infinitely lovely should not be loved by men, so inconsolably afflicted the Saints, such as St. Catharine of Siena, St. Teresa, and St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, as to cause them sometimes to sigh for death, and to cry out in their holy transports of zeal, love, and suffering : “Love is not loved, Love is not loved!” Oh, sons of men ! how long will your minds be so blinded, and your hearts so weighed down by earthly things, as to have no wish to see the One True Beauty, and to love the One True Love ! Thus it must be, my sweet and adorable Jesus, till Thou Thyself, Who art the Light of the World, shalt so enlighten, elevate, and fortify our minds as to render them capable of knowing Thee ; until Thou shalt so detach, purify, and warm our hearts as to render them capable of loving Thee ; until Thou

shalt not only make known to our minds Thy Beauty, but also make our hearts sensible to the power of its charms, so that we shall confess that there is none but Thee Who art beautiful, and perfect, and lovely, and that consequently Thou only dost deserve our love.

MOTIVE II.

WE SHOULD LOVE JESUS, BECAUSE HE HAS
LOVED US.

LOVE is the only price by which we can adequately pay for love, and in the same way also we can say that to love is the most effectual means of making ourselves beloved. What limit then should there be to our love for our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has loved us as much as it is possible to love? He has loved us infinitely more than we have loved ourselves; and yet to what length does not our self-love go? He has loved us so much, that if all the Angels and all mankind were to unite and

conspire to love us with all their might, their love would be less in proportion to the love of Jesus Christ for us than a drop of water compared with the ocean. More than this. Were you to accumulate in one single heart the love borne to God through all eternity by all the Saints, by all the Blessed Spirits, by the Blessed Virgin herself, all this would not approach to the love Jesus has for us, because all such love is finite, but that of Jesus is infinite. For this reason St. John says, in speaking of the love of our Lord for men, that He carried it to an excess. His love in this instance exhausted His power ; and though He was God and all powerful, He put it, as it were, out of His power to do more for men. "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end."* And indeed, if we consider Christ as God, is it not to have loved us to excess, never to have been a single instant from all eternity without thinking of us, without occupying Himself

* St. John xiii. 1.

about us, without loving us ; and moreover loving us with a love so efficacious as to produce in time results so great as we know? If we regard Him as Man, is it not having loved us to excess, to have thought of us from the first to the last moment of His life ; not to have made the slightest movement which was not a movement of love for us? Is it not to have loved us to excess, to have loved us more than His repose, more than His glory, more than His pleasure, more than His possessions, more than His life, sacrificing all these that He might win our love? Is it not to have loved us to excess, to have made this sacrifice with joy and pleasure? For His love for us made this painful sacrifice of Himself sweet and pleasant to Him, because it was to be useful to us. Again, is it not loving us to excess, to be, as He declared to a Saint, ready to renew daily this sacrifice for each one of us, if it were necessary for our salvation and to win our love?

Hence it follows that the love Jesus

had for us during His life was such, that had He let its transports go their full length, and not sustained Himself by the power of His Divinity against such intense emotions, the force of His love would have killed Him. What, indeed, would not have been the obligation we should have been under to love Him, had He died from nothing but the excess of His love for us? Do we owe Him less, then, because He miraculously preserved His life against the intensity of His love, that He might sacrifice it for us afterwards by a death equally painful and ignominious? Even then, if Thou, my Divine Lord, wert not in Thyself so lovely as Thou art; if Thou hadst not bestowed such great benefits on us, if Thou hadst not endured such great evils for us, if Thou hadst not delivered us from still greater evils, how could we do less than return Thee love for love?—than love Thee, at least, with all our might, which is finite, since Thou hast loved us with all Thine, which is infinite? We are unable

to refrain from showing love and tenderness even to an animal if it loves us, or shows its love by caresses, or appears to have a special attachment to us ; and yet, the only love which is uninfluential and powerless to attract love for love, which rather attracts scorn and insult, is that of Jesus, which is eternal, infinite, and disinterested ! Could there ever be more horrible ingratitude ! Do not let us, my Jesus, be capable of it ; rather destroy our hearts, which have hitherto been so sensible to the love of creatures and so little alive to Thy love, than suffer us to live without loving Thee, as perhaps we have done till now !

For in truth, if Thou wert to ask each of us, my Jesus, as Thou didst ask St. Peter, " Lovest thou me ? " * we might be blind and presumptuous enough to answer as he did—" Thou knowest, Lord, that I love Thee." But will not our heart, by its secret reproaches, belie our words ? For if we loved Thee, my Divine Saviour, should we think so little about Thee,

* St. John xxi. 15.

should we occupy ourselves so little with Thee, should we have so little fear of displeasing Thee, so little wish to please Thee? Should we be so little zealous for Thy glory, so little alive to Thy interests, so little affected by the insults daily done unto Thee? Should we have such indifference for Thy inspirations, such infidelity to Thy grace, such ingratitude for Thy benefits, such disregard for Thy maxims, so little zeal in following Thy example? Should we have such horror as we have of those things which Thou didst especially love and embrace—humiliation and suffering—although we know that it is only through them that we are able to resemble Thee, please Thee more, show Thee our love, and merit Thine?

And after all this, shall we dare tell Thee, my Jesus, that we love Thee, without fear of denying the truth and our own conscience, when we consider how little our conduct corresponds to our words? Thou alone, O Lord, canst make my words agree with my conduct, my lips with my

heart, by causing me to begin, now at least, to say with truth: "Thou knowest Lord that I love Thee."

MOTIVE III.

WE SHOULD LOVE JESUS, BECAUSE HE ARDENTLY
DESIRES WE SHOULD LOVE HIM.

IF we ardently desire the friendship of others, it is either for the gratification we find in it, the advantages we hope to gain from it, the honour it may do us, or the consideration it may obtain for us. None of these motives could influence God in ardently seeking for the friendship of man. Man being in himself so insignificant, his friendship must also be so, especially with regard to God. For, whether we love God or love him not, He is none the less great, or good, or happy, or sufficient for Himself. Nevertheless, says St. Thomas, to see how ardently God desires and seeks the friendship of man, one would say that man was the god of God Himself, and that the

supreme happiness of the Creator depended on the creature, *Quasi homo Dei Deus esset*. One would have thought that we should have considered it a great thing and a special grace, that God should condescend so far as to permit us to love Him. What should we feel then, when Jesus, this God-Man, earnestly desires our love, and begs it eagerly of us ?

The majesty of kings inspires their subjects with such fear and respect as almost to forbid their love, or at any rate, to forbid them the liberty of expressing it ; and a man, unless he is a very privileged favourite, who should think of saying to the king, "I love you," would be set down as either very bold or very foolish. His only reward would be insult, or at least ridicule and scorn. But the Sovereign Majesty of God, before Whom kings are as insignificant as ourselves, is not thus unapproachable. Not only does He permit, He obliges us, to love him, and far from being offended or repelled by our constantly telling Him, "I love Thee, my God," He

has a special pleasure, although He knows it before we tell Him, in hearing us often repeat it. David wonders that God should be so willing to remember man. "What is man that thou art mindful of him?"* Job wonders that He should deign look on him. "And dost Thou think it meet to open Thy eyes upon such an one?"† But, according to the opinion of Job, what is beyond all wonder is, that God should care to set His Mind and Heart on loving such a miserable creature. "Why dost Thou set Thy Heart upon him?"‡ Nevertheless, it is this same eagerness and ardour which we find indicated to us in hundreds of places in Scripture. It is indicated in the Book of Proverbs by the earnest cries of uncreated Wisdom to attract man to her. "O ye men, to you I call!"§ by that pressing entreaty she makes to man for his heart—"My son, give me thy heart!" It is indicated in the Book of Canticles by the tender anxiety of the Spouse, who

* Psalm viii. 5.

‡ Job vii. 17.

† Job xiv. 3.

§ Prov. viii. 4.

typifies Jesus, by that ardour with which He invites His bride, that is the faithful soul, to love Him, receive Him, open to Him the door of her heart, "Open to me, my sister, my love."* It is indicated in the Gospel by the ardent zeal with which the Good Shepherd goes to search for the lost sheep, by the pain He feels for its loss and wanderings, by the delight He evinces on its return. This is what He indicates on the Cross when saying those words—"I thirst"†—to show not so much His bodily thirst, as the ardour with which He desired the love of men. This is what He again indicated so plainly by that earnest, thrice repeated, question He put to St. Peter, whether he loved Him. Could our Lord Jesus Christ manifest to us more strongly than He has done His intense desire that we should love Him? And yet He is not satisfied with this. He attracts us by His benefits—"In all things you are made rich in Him."‡ He invites us by His promises—"With Me are riches, that I

* Can. v. 2. † St. John xix. 28. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 5.

may enrich those who love Me.”* He urges us by His inspirations—“Behold I stand at the gate and knock.”† He compels us by His commands—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.”‡ He constrains us, as it were, by His threats—“He that loveth not, abideth in death.”§ In fine, everything He proposes, everything He produces in the order of nature and of grace, tends only to constrain man to love Him. What then! does not the reiterated prayer and earnest wish of some importunate person often force us, though we care very little about him, to grant his request; and shall not the holy entreaties of Jesus for our love, which is to cause our happiness, force us to give it Him? “Alas,” says St. Augustine, “Thou dost command me, Lord, to love Thee, and if I refuse, Thou dost threaten me with the greatest misery. Is there, then, in the world, any misfortune equal to that of not loving Thee? No, my God;

* Prov. viii. 18, 21.

‡ Matt. xxii. 37.

† Apoc. iii. 20.

§ 1 John iii. 14.

if Thou wishest to frighten me, threaten me not with the fires of hell, threaten only that I shall never burn with the fire of Thy divine love; this threat will be more terrible to me than a thousand hells. For if in the flames of hell one spark of Thy love could fall into the hearts of those poor reprobate souls, hell would be no longer hell to them, but a real Paradise. If, on the contrary, the Blessed could be in Heaven without loving Thee, Paradise would no longer be a Paradise to them, but a real hell."

It seems to me, my Jesus, when I search my heart, that I really wish, in good faith, to love Thee. Why is it then that I love Thee not, though Thou dost desire it, and that indeed more ardently than I do? Doubtless, it is that my desire is not effectual or sincere like Thine. Then, my Jesus, it is for Thee to give me this sincere desire of loving Thee, or better still, give me Love itself, for I can never desire Thy love as I ought, still less acquire it without Thee!

MOTIVE IV.

WE SHOULD LOVE JESUS, BECAUSE HE HAS OBTAINED FOR AND BESTOWED ON US GREAT BENEFITS.

IT is not without reason that the Apostle tells us that Jesus Christ has enriched us with such prodigality, that nothing is wanting to us that we can desire—"That in all things you are made rich in Him, so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace."* None but He Who bestowed these benefits on us can perfectly understand their multitude and greatness; and none but He can make us to comprehend this, at least perfectly. To form in some measure a conception of their multitude, it is sufficient to say, that we owe to Jesus all the blessings of nature, all of grace, and all of glory; that we owe to Jesus the ineffable benefits of Redemption, Predestination, Election, Justification, and that which is to be seal of all others, Glorification. But let us pause at that of Re-

* 1 Cor. i. 5, 7.

demption, which is the source of all the others, and which includes in itself so many others, because Jesus willed to be our Redeemer. From the first to the last moment of His life, He thought, and acted, prayed, and suffered, and laboured, and lived for us alone. Not a step did He take, not a word did He utter, not a miracle did He work, not a sigh did He breathe, not a tear did He let fall, not a drop of blood did He shed, which was not for us. So that we may reckon the benefits conferred upon us by Jesus, and the obligations we owe to Him, by every movement of His Heart and Mind, of which we were always the object and the end ; by every moment of His life, for every moment was consecrated to us. Hadst Thou, O Divine Saviour, bestowed upon us but one sigh, but one tear, but one throb of Thy Heart, our obligations to Thee would have been infinite, since each one of these actions, coming from an Infinite Being, would have been of infinite value. What then must we think and what can we say, but that

we are under, so to speak, an infinity of infinite obligations to Thee, since Thou didst not make one movement which was not for us, and that therefore we have an infinity of motives for infinitely loving Thee, were that possible. We owe to Jesus the favour and friendship of His Father, the position of children of God and inheritors of eternal happiness. We owe to Him all the blessings we continue daily to receive from God. If God preserves us, protects us, helps us, it is for Jesus' sake. From Jesus proceed all graces, lights, inspirations, good thoughts, good dispositions, fidelity to grace, protection from danger, strength in temptation, constancy in suffering, patience in adversity, perseverance in good. "In all things you are made rich in Him." It is, therefore, from Him, as from our Head, that all these graces and favours flow down upon us, who are His members, the smallest of which graces we cannot obtain but from Him and through Him. If there is a continual stream, so to speak, of graces and favours flowing from

the Head to the members, is it not natural there should be a continual reflux of love and gratitude from the members to the Head, from Whom they receive such numberless blessings, and without Whose assistance they can do nothing good? It is this which made the Son of God say, that without Him we can do nothing.* As the branch of the vine cannot bring forth fruit of itself unless it be attached to the stem, so we cannot do good unless we live in Him and in union with Him.

But if these benefits are so important on account of their multitude, much more so are they from the circumstances which accompany them. For there is not one, however insignificant it may appear in itself, which is not in some sort infinite, for it proceeds from an Infinite Being, it springs from an infinite love, and results in an infinite happiness.

There is not one of these benefits which is not eternal. For not only does each proceed from an eternal love, God having

* St. John xv. 5.

generously determined from eternity to bestow this blessing on us, but also because it leads us to eternal happiness. There is not one which is not special to each one of us, however common it may appear. Owing to our self-love and secret pride, which always crave to be preferred before others, we naturally like to be singled out, so that the distinction shown in the graces bestowed on us often affects us more than the graces themselves, which, however great they may be, appear to us to lose part of their merit so soon as they are common to many. But it is not thus with God's benefits, which, though they are common to many, should be looked on as special to each one of us. First, because it is the same with God's favours as with His love, which is undivided and undiminished by the act of communication ; as is the case with the light of the sun, which in illuminating the whole world communicates its light to each one singly with as much fulness as if there were no one else to be illuminated. Secondly, because He gives us graces,

however general and common they may seem, with as particular an intention as if there were none but ourselves on whom to bestow them. Lastly, because His good will to us is such that He would be equally ready to bestow His blessings on us, though there should be none but us to profit by them. It was this which caused St. Paul to look on the Redemption with the same gratitude as he would have felt had Jesus Christ died for him alone: "Who loved me, and delivered Himself for me."*

And not only are the benefits of Jesus infinite, eternal, and singular, but they are also continual. His goodness never tires of doing us good and overwhelming us incessantly with His graces. We might count the moments of our lives by the number of His benefits; and perhaps, by as many acts of ingratitude on our part. Again, we are not only indebted to Jesus for the benefits He bestows on us at this present time, but also for those He will

* Gal. ii. 20.

bestow on us throughout all eternity, if we are predestinated, as we should hope we are; and not only for these, but also for those He would have bestowed on us had we not frustrated them by our infidelity and resistance—"In all things you are made rich in Him."

If benefits have so wonderful a power in winning hearts, so that even dumb animals cannot refrain from showing love and gratitude to those who are kind to them, what effect should not be made on us by the number of benefits, so many and so vast, which we owe to Jesus? Alas, says William of Paris, what a wonderful miracle is this! a miracle wrought indeed by the power of the devil and not of God, that the heart of man, surrounded with such numberless benefits, like so many burning coals, should remain, in spite of them, a block of ice—*Homo tot congestis carbonibus diabolico miraculo friget ad Deum.*

We pride ourselves on being generous friends, responsive to the friendship shown

us by miserable creatures, and alive to feelings of gratitude for benefits which are always of little worth, and often fatal to us. And yet we remain unmoved by the proofs of love shown us by the God-Man! We have no gratitude for benefits which are at the same time both infinite and essential to us!

What! can the benefits of Jesus, which are singular, unceasing, eternal and infinite, and the gifts of a God, can they change their nature? Can they do us harm? Are they alone unworthy of our love, and powerless to excite our gratitude? It is a small thing, indeed, to speak of that they do not win our gratitude—but that we should repay them with indifference and coldness, and the blackest of all ingratitude, can we think of this without astonishment? Can we own ourselves guilty without dying of shame or grief?

As a climax to Thy graces, my amiable Jesus, Thou must add one other, without which they will not only be useless but fatal to me. It is to impress on my heart,

a sincere and tender gratitude for these benefits, and a constant, generous love of Thee, Who art the Author of them. This, as a crown to all the others, is the great and, henceforth, the only favour which, through Thyself, I ask of Thee.

MOTIVE V.

WE SHOULD LOVE JESUS, BECAUSE HE HAS
GIVEN HIMSELF TO US.

WHATEVER may have been the blessings or the gifts of our Lord to man, they were insufficient fully to satisfy the desire which God had to communicate Himself infinitely. Nor were they sufficient to satisfy the capacity man had of receiving more, and thus his heart, still feeling empty in the midst of this abundance, cried out, lamenting with a Saint—"Whatever Thou givest me, will never satisfy me, so long as Thou givest me not Thyself!" It was therefore requisite that Jesus, after having given us everything, should give us Him-

self—*Non jam sua, sed seipsum nobis impendit.*

This He accomplished in instituting the Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which He gives Himself wholly to us, that is His Body, His Blood, His Soul and all the merits of that Holy Soul, His Divinity and all the perfections of that Divinity; and all this He has given in the most perfect manner possible.

The perfection of a gift depends on three things: that we should have it in our own immediate possession, have absolute control and have entire use of it. These three things are amply found in the gift which Jesus makes of Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist.

(1.) The possession of it is as intimate and as immediate as it is possible to be. For it is not accomplished only by union of will, harmony of mind, and conformity of affections and sentiments, but by an intimate union of the Real and Physical Body of Jesus Christ with the body and soul of him who receives It.

(2.) The dominion which we acquire over the body of Jesus Christ is absolute. We are able to do what we please with Him, absolutely and unreservedly. We can retain Him in our churches, carry Him through our streets, take Him into our houses, visit Him, touch Him, receive Him, feed on Him, consume Him, and, which is still more astonishing, He yields Himself unreservedly into the power even of the greatest wretches, though He knows well they will only use their power to insult and profane Him! What, in the whole world, is there over which we have such absolute power?

(3.) The use of it is entire. Jesus Christ is everything to us in the Eucharist. In His Incarnation He made Himself our Brother; in His Birth, our Companion; in His Life, our Model; in His Doctrine, our Master; in His Death, our Redeemer; in His Glory, our Recompenser. Jesus is all these at once to us in the Eucharist. Let us rather say He is more to us in It than this; for He is also our Father,

our Brother, our Master, our Companion, our Food, our Pastor, our Medicine, our Physician, our Viaticum, our Guide, the Price of our ransom, our Redeemer, our Reward, our Recompenser. Cannot I truly say, then, as St. Bernard did, that Jesus in the Eucharist has given Himself wholly to me, He is occupied wholly for me, and He has consecrated Himself wholly to my wants—*Totus mihi datus, totus in meos usus expensus.*

Surely, then, if Jesus has given Himself wholly to us, we cannot refuse to give ourselves wholly to Him. He fruitlessly exhausted the treasures of His liberality, the might of His power, and the attractions of His love, to win our hearts ; and seeing that do what He would, and give what He would, He could not make us love Him, He at last gave us Himself, that He might merit our love. After having resisted all His gifts and all His graces, can we hold out against Himself? If there had been anything better than Himself to give us, He would have given it. But though

He is God, He is powerless to give us anything better than Himself—*Quid enim poterat dare melius seipso!* (St. Bernard).

Alas, said St. Bernard, if I am incapable of acknowledging all the blessings Thou hast bestowed on me, how shall I be able to acknowledge the benefit by which Thou givest me Thyself? If Thou wert to demand of us all our goods, our blood, our life, should we sufficiently repay Thee for what Thou givest us, when Thou givest us Thy Own Self in the Eucharist? Should we be giving Thee anything which equalled the value of a God? But Jesus does not demand as much as this of us. He simply asks for a little love; a little of that love which we lavish so unworthily on creatures, and which we refuse only to Jesus, Who alone is worthy of it. We love a slave or a dumb animal because it is ours; and yet, Thou, my Jesus, we love Thee not, though Thou art all our own, and though Thou hast made Thyself all ours in a way so capable of winning us to love Thee! Thou thinkest not that it is giving me

too much to give me Thy whole Self. And yet I hesitate whether to give myself wholly to Thee! Is it then, my soul, such a great misfortune to belong wholly to thy Jesus, that thou shouldst hesitate so long before thou canst resolve upon it? Alas, my Saviour, I have often told Thee that I gave Thee my heart, and that I wished to be all Thine, but either I was insincere and false in my words, or else I have been inconstant in my resolutions. But now, my Divine Jesus, I wish to be really, unreservedly, and for ever Thine. Therefore I give Thee the irrevocable gift of my heart. I consecrate to Thee my body and soul, all the thoughts of my mind, all the emotions of my heart, and all the actions of my life. I renounce henceforth all motions contrary to this gift which may escape me through frailty or unwariness, and I protest that I will be all Thine in life and in death, in time and eternity. Every good thing is yours, said St. Paul, to the Faithful, because Jesus Christ has obtained all goods for you; as for

you, ye are Christ's. What riches ! What happiness ! Too happy if we possess them, happier still, if Jesus possesses us !

MOTIVE VI.

WE SHOULD LOVE JESUS, BECAUSE HE HAS
SUFFERED MUCH FOR US.

THERE is no stronger, no more convincing proof of love than to suffer for one we love. In comparison with this, all others are either doubtful, or at any rate trifling. Benefits are, I allow, strong and tangible proofs of friendship, but after all, we only show in giving our goods that we prefer our friends to our goods, of which we deprive ourselves so willingly for their sakes ; but in suffering for them, we prove that we prefer them to ourselves. It was then, in this way, that the Son of God desired, at whatever cost, to convince us of the strength and greatness of His love, in order that He might thereby merit ours. Though He had done so much for us, and

given Himself to us, He still considered it insufficient, either to satisfy His love or to merit ours, until He had convinced us of it by submitting Himself for our sakes to the severest sufferings, the most horrible tortures, and the most cruel and ignominious of deaths. But if His sufferings provide us with such strong motives for loving Him, much more so do they from the circumstances which accompany them, for there it not one of these which is not in itself a motive for loving Him.

It is a God Who suffers; therefore no extraneous power can constrain Him, since being God, He is independent. Being the Holy of Holies, He had no faults to expiate and no pain to suffer on His own part, therefore there was nothing to oblige Him. Neither on our side was there any reason which could compel Him; for not only were we poor vile creatures, but His rebellious and ungrateful enemies. Had we been all annihilated or damned, He would have been none the less great and none the less happy. And yet, that He might deliver

us from everlasting torments, which we deserved, and to obtain for us everlasting happiness, which we could not deserve, He exposed Himself to suffering for our ransom, as if our misery were His, or as if the preservation of His Being and His greatest happiness depended on ours. Any one forming a clear conception of what God is and what man is, the greatness of the one and the meanness of the other, would find it hard to make these two extremes meet—a God dying for man. But should he be happy enough to conceive this, I mean a God forgetting Himself and His greatness so far as to die for man, he would find enough to occupy the rest of his life in wonder and admiration, even to die of grief or love at the thought of it. It was this that forced a Saint to exclaim in an ecstasy of love and astonishment: “What! do I see my Love dying on the Cross, and yet I can live”—*Amor meus crucifixus est, et ego vivo.* But if I do live, let it be on condition that I live henceforth for Jesus only, Who so

willingly died for me—"That they also who live, may not now live to themselves but unto Him Who died for them."*

In the second place, what makes this still more admirable is, that our Lord, had He willed, could have ransomed us by one drop of His Blood, by one tear, by one sigh, or by the least movement of His Heart, because there could be no action performed by this God-Man which was not of infinite value, proceeding as it did from One of infinite dignity. And yet, instead of this, my adorable Jesus, for our ransom Thou didst choose to suffer the fiercest persecutions, the blackest calumnies, the most merciless outrages and insults, the most cruel tortures, and at last, after having poured out Thy Blood to its very last drop, to die in the extreme of agony and obliquy on the Cross, in order to prove to us the excess of Thy love by the excess of Thy sufferings, and also that we, seeing what we had cost Thee, might be unable to refuse to give ourselves up wholly to

* 2 Cor. v. 15.

Thee. *Redemit undâ cum posset guttâ*"
(St. Bernard).

Thirdly. If the love of Jesus Christ is proved to us by what He suffered, still better is it proved by the ardour and eagerness with which He desires to suffer—"With desire I have desired," He says Himself, "to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer."* "And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptised: and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!"† He treats His most zealous disciple as Satan, because He would have opposed His intention of dying for men. Again, on the Cross, He shows His impatience to suffer by saying that He still thirsts; for His thirst to suffer for man's salvation is not appeased by the out-pouring of all His Blood. If, when in the Garden of Olives, He showed a dread of suffering, and asked that He might not drink of the Chalice of His Passion, far from making us less grateful, this should but increase our gratitude to Him. For if He abandoned Himself voluntarily to the

* St. Luke xxii. 15.

Ibid., xii. 50.

weakness of our nature, it was that His sufferings might be more intense, and so might cost Him more, and prove to us more plainly the greatness of His love.

Fourthly. Our loving Saviour was not contented with an ardent desire alone of the sufferings of His Passion. By a wonderful invention of His love, He found a means of anticipating them, and of foretasting the cruelty of His executioners, by permitting His Heart, in His Agony, to suffer a martyrdom a thousand times more cruel than that which He suffered in His Sacred Body at the hands of His persecutors.

Fifthly. He suffered all these tortures without the slightest alleviation. He did not use the power of His Divinity to comfort, but simply to sustain Himself, so that by supporting His life, which would naturally have sunk at once under the weight of His sufferings, He might be able to lengthen the time of His sufferings for us. If He had any consolation, it was only in the thought that it was for us He suffered ; that His sufferings would be useful to us ;

and that perhaps they would soften the hardness of our hearts and make us love Him. It was to such an extent as this that Jesus in His Passion was carried by His love for men ; this forced Him to cry out when He was dying : "It is consummated."* His sufferings and His love could go no further—God as He was, He was powerless to do more for men.

Lastly, what makes all these circumstances of the Passion of our Lord still more admirable is, that He does not demand of us, as a proof of our gratitude for all He suffered, a sacrifice of our goods, or our repose, our pleasures, our honour, or our life. And yet has He not the right to ask this of us ? Could we, without ingratitude and injustice, refuse this to Him ? He demands nothing of us but our love as His only reward, and as our only proof of gratitude to Him. As to the manner of showing our love, He asks nothing but that we should not offend Him. And after all this, as if He were too well repaid for

* St. John xix. 30.

His sufferings, and as if He yet owed us something, He promises us eternal happiness on condition that we do not offend Him. What condescension ! What love ! What goodness !

Truly, can we think of all these circumstances of the Passion of God, in which His love shines out so clearly, without being touched and penetrated to our very heart ? Must we not be more unfeeling than the wild beasts, harder than the rocks, if we remain unmoved by the love of a God dying from the excess of His love for us, and if we cannot give Him love for love ?

If a man or a slave, or the lowest of all creatures, had endured but the hundredth part of what Jesus endured for us, although under very different circumstances, we could not have refrained from loving him, being grateful to him, or at least showing signs of compassion and sorrow for his sufferings, and saying sometimes with a sigh : "After all, this poor wretch loved me ; had he not loved me he would not have suffered as much." Yet the love shown by a God,

dying on a Cross, or rather, dying more from the intensity of His love than from what He suffered, is the only proof of love to which we remain unmoved, which we repay with coldness and indifference! Is it possible to believe that rational men, men with hearts, should be capable of such gross ingratitude, such strange hardness, to which, except with regard to God, we can find no parallel?

I freely avow, that in the difficulty we naturally have in submitting our understanding to what Faith teaches us about the eternity of the pains of hell, nothing helps me better to understand it than the conduct of the greater number of Christians—their indifference, or rather their ingratitude, and the readiness with which they constantly offend a God and Saviour Who so loved them as to die on a Cross for them. Is it possible that hell, or even a thousand hells, could adequately expiate the frightful insensibility and continual ingratitude of men, who do not love the God-Man, Jesus, Who was crucified for them? Who do not

love Him, did I say?—rather, who despise Him more shamefully than they would despise the most abject creature, and who insult him more cruelly than they would insult their most implacable enemy!

Ah! my Saviour, now I understand why it is that in the great Day of Thy Vengeance Thou wilt show Thy Cross in the Heavens. No doubt the sight of the Cross will be more terrible to reprobate Christians than the sight of the exterminating angels, or the devils, or the fire of hell, or even the sight of Thy angry countenance, for it will remind them of the excess of Thy love, and the excess of their ingratitude towards a Saviour fastened to that Cross, and expiring for them thereon. Yes! whoever well understands those almost incomprehensible words, *A God crucified for men*, will not find it hard to understand those others, however incomprehensible they may sound,—*The same ungrateful men punished by God with eternal torment*. Grant, my Jesus, that I may understand them so well in this life, that in the next I may not

be so unfortunate as to understand and feel them by bitter experience! For indeed, my Saviour, if we love Thee not, we bear witness to our own condemnation, and we must admit that all those who would not burn in this life with the flames which Thy goodness and mercy have sought to kindle in their hearts, deserve to burn in the flames which Thy anger and Thy justice have kindled in hell.

MOTIVE VII.

WE SHOULD LOVE JESUS, BECAUSE OF THE
RELATION IN WHICH HE STANDS TO US.

WE cannot help loving those who have some connection with us. It is like a secret though powerful charm which sweetly attracts our hearts, or like an invisible chain which almost imperceptibly draws us together. The same reason which imposes on us the pleasant necessity of loving ourselves obliges us almost as necessarily

to love, and with a tender love, those with whom we are connected, as if they were our second selves, or at least part of ourselves.

This is why Jesus, Who desired to win, not only our love, but our tenderest affection, chose to stand towards us in every relation that could help to excite this love in us. We will not speak of our relation to Jesus as our God, our Creator, our King, or our Master, for these titles create in us feelings as much of awe and fear as of love and tenderness. He is our Saviour, for He has delivered us from sin and its fatal consequences, that is from the slavery of the devil, the hatred and anger of His Father, and eternal death. And that we might understand the full virtue of His merits and the plenteousness of His redemption, He was not satisfied with only delivering us from these evils, but He obtained for us those opposite blessings of liberty, of grace, the friendship of His Father, and the position of children of God, and inheritors of eternal life: "Thou shalt call His Name

JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins.”*

He is our Father, for He conceived us on the Cross in the intensity of His sufferings and in the ardour of His love. He gave us birth to the life of grace, through that Wound which opened His Side and pierced His Heart — “Is not He thy Father, that hath made thee, and created thee?” †

He is our Brother, not only because He has made Himself resemble us in nature, when He made Himself Man like us, but also because He has chosen us for His brethren by a kind of adoption, and made us joint-heirs with Himself. St. Paul also tells us that He was not ashamed to call us His brothers. ‡

He is the true Spouse of our souls, as He says Himself: “Behold the Bridegroom cometh ;” § but a Spouse of Blood, for this alliance with us has cost Him all His Blood ; a Spouse, Who gives to His

* St. Matt. i. 21.

‡ Heb. ii. 11.

† Deut. xxxii. 6.

§ St. Matt. xxv. 6.

Brides, for their dowry, nothing less than Eternal Life; a Spouse, Whose love makes us chaste, Whose holy embraces purify us, as said that generous Virgin and illustrious Martyr St. Agnes; and Who makes us, by the union we have with Him, completely happy and perfectly holy.

He is our Shepherd, Who not only leads and protects His sheep, but also feeds them with His own Body and Blood, after having exposed and given His life for them—"I am the Good Shepherd."*

He is our Physician, for He came down on earth only to heal us of our diseases; and He assures us that it was not for the healthy, but for the sick, that He came.† Nay more, He is that wonderful Physician Who makes a salve of His own Blood to heal our wounds.

Lastly, He is our faithful and constant Friend. For though He is God, He does not disdain to take to Himself this title, and He seems even to take pride in it—"I will not now call you servants, but I have

* St. John x. 11.

† St. Matt. ix. 12.

called you friends.”* This is all the more wonderful, since we see amongst men, that kings give willingly enough the name of favourites to their subjects, but would think it derogatory to their dignity to call them friends.

Well then, should not all these our relations to Jesus attract our love and excite our tenderness? Can a poor wretch help loving His Liberator and Saviour? Can a son help loving his Father, and the best of Fathers? *Nemo tam Pater*—“No one is so much a Father as God;” or a bride her Spouse—a Spouse to Whom she owes everything? Can a brother help loving the most amiable of Brothers, Who comes not to lessen his possessions by taking His own part of them, but to impart to him all His own possessions, which are infinite? Can a sheep not love the Shepherd Who preserves its life by giving His own for its? Can a sick man fail to love the Physician Who cures him by making a remedy of His own Blood? or a friend,

* St. John xv. 15.

to love the tenderest and most generous of Friends? Ah! if a single one of these claims, a single one of these relations is so powerful amongst men to excite their affection; if by these means extraordinary impressions are made and wonderful effects are produced every day on their hearts, what impressions, my Divine Jesus, ought not to be made on us by all these relations united in Thee, which are far more real than any we can have with a creature? Do they not oblige us to concentrate all our affections on Thee? In Thee alone do we find all the qualities and all the motives capable of exciting our tenderness and attracting our love. We ought therefore no longer to divide our hearts so unworthily; but, in future, love nothing but Jesus, or at any rate, nothing but in Jesus, and through Jesus.

MOTIVE VIII.

WE SHOULD LOVE JESUS, BECAUSE ALL OUR HAPPINESS AND PERFECTION CONSIST IN LOVING HIM.

IF we are not generous enough to love Jesus out of gratitude, let us at least be wise enough to love Him from self-interest. If the blessings we receive from Him cannot move us, let us at least be moved by those we hope to receive. Ah! what blessings may we not hope to receive from Him! If we are so senseless as not to love Jesus for His own sake, we ought, at any rate, to be self-interested enough to love Him for our own. We find in the love of Jesus our own sweetness and our repose. Our perfection is bound up in it; and our happiness in time and eternity depends on it.

(1.) We find in this our delight and repose. If Jesus was made for us, so also we are made for Jesus. Our hearts therefore can never be satisfied, nor our minds at rest, without possessing Jesus. Now,

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we possess Him by loving Him. Other things may occupy our hearts and interest our minds, but they can never perfectly satisfy either of them. It is only the love of Jesus that can make us taste real sweetness. Those who love Jesus know well by their own experience the infinite sweetness, the solid consolations, the holy delights which they taste in the practice of this sacred love, and which are sometimes so intense that the infirmity of human nature cannot support them, and is constrained to beg of Jesus either to strengthen its weakness, or to moderate His favours. But we must love if we would experience these things; and we must experience them before we can understand, or even believe in them.

We are fain to taste of this sweetness, but we wish it to cost us nothing. For, in truth, nothing is so pleasant as to love, especially to love one like Jesus. There is no one who would not acknowledge this; and no one, I imagine, who does not desire it. But there is no way to this love

except through death ; none to the sweetness of the one except through the bitterness of the other : and this road few care to follow. We are very willing to accompany Jesus with His disciples to Mount Thabor, but we forsake Him on Calvary as they did. We wish to participate in the highest favours of Jesus and share at the same time those of the world ; to possess the delights of Heaven without losing those of earth ; and to taste the purest spiritual pleasures without renouncing the pleasures of sense. And yet this cannot be. O my Divine Jesus, since we cannot live without pleasure, adapt Thyself to our weakness, and give us a foretaste of Thy joys, that we may quit without difficulty those of the world ! Give us a little of that living water which Thou didst offer to the Samaritan woman. Pour, along with Thy grace into our hearts, a drop of that celestial dew, that holy unction, which may enable us to taste how sweet Thou art, O Lord, and fill us with a distaste for creatures, which will make us regard, not only with disdain

but even with horror, all the fatal pleasures of the flesh, and all the false sweetness of the world!

(2.) Our perfection is bound up in this, not only because it consists in this love, and, as St. Augustine says, the beginning of perfection is the beginning of love—not because the growth of one is the growth of the other, and perfect love is the consummation of perfection—but because it may well be said that this love is a means of attaining perfection, and that the surest, easiest, and quickest road to gain perfection in a short time, is to endeavour from the first to love the Sacred Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to apply ourselves with all our might to acquire His love. For this love, even when in its beginning, and as yet imperfect, generally inspires even sensible devotion, and makes it easy to overcome a thousand obstacles that often alarm and even arrest the steps of those who are beginning to walk in the way of perfection. Would to God that Directors made greater use of this method! they

would assuredly draw great fruit from it.

It is this love alone that can sweeten those virtues which seem to us so austere and so opposed to our passions, so contrary even to our reason, so painful to our senses, and in which notwithstanding Evangelical Perfection consists—I mean the hatred of ourselves, the constant renunciation of our natural inclinations, and the love of crosses and humiliations. In inducing us to love Jesus, as being so worthy of our love, it accustoms us to look, at first without aversion, and afterwards even with love, upon those virtues which Jesus so deeply loved, and of which He gave us such beautiful examples; which we cannot indeed love except upon those grounds, but which cannot fail of being loved by every soul that sincerely loves Jesus.

In fact, if love either supposes or naturally creates a resemblance between the loved and the lover, we cannot love Jesus without earnestly desiring to resemble Him,

and placing in that resemblance our greatest happiness. We cannot be like Him unless we have the same sentiments, the same inclinations, and the same affections; and we cannot have these if we do not value, do not love, do not embrace that which He valued, and loved, and embraced; namely, those sufferings, poverty, and humiliations, which were both in His life and in His death, such dear and inseparable companions of Jesus Christ. We cannot, then, love Jesus, nor prove to Him our love, unless we love poverty, sufferings, and humiliations. Is there anything in this argument which is not either of faith or self-evident? And if it is thus, how many are there even among Christians, even among those who make a profession of devotion, who really love Jesus? Let us, who read this, search our own hearts on this point, and without deceiving ourselves think it over seriously in the presence of God, and at the foot of the crucifix.

Alas my Jesus! with what shame does this examination fill me! how frightened I

am at this consideration, for it proves clearly to me that I love Thee not! And what am I doing, or what am I, if I do not love Thee? Either a Christian but in name, or an actual reprobate! Ah, my Saviour! let me begin by what is easiest, namely, by loving Thee, in order that I may afterwards do that which is more difficult, and love that which alone Thou didst love—poverty, suffering, and humiliation.

(3.) Our Happiness in Time and Eternity depends on the love of Jesus Christ. For this is the surest means of deserving the love of His Eternal Father, Who loves us only in as much as we love His Son, as Jesus has Himself told us—"For the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me."* He gives us graces out of consideration for Jesus alone, and according to our devotion to Him. He has made our eternal happiness depend on our conformity to Him—"For whom He foreknew He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son."†

* St. John xvi. 27.

† Rom. viii. 29.

Thus we may say that love for the Sacred Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, is at the same time the most efficacious cause, the most visible proof, and the surest pledge of our predestination. In conclusion, then, let us love Jesus if we love ourselves. Let us love Him at least from self-interest, if we are not sufficiently just to love Him from a sense of what is due to Him, nor disinterested enough to love Him out of a pure generosity. Woe to us if we live, but still greater woe if we die, without having loved Jesus. St. Paul pronounced an anathema for time and eternity against those who love not our Lord Jesus Christ.* But why pronounce it against such poor wretches? Do not they themselves pronounce it against themselves by wilfully separating themselves from Jesus? For can there be a more terrible excommunication than such a separation? And are they not separated from Him when they are not united to Him? And do they not cease to be united to

* 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

Him as soon as they do not love Him? Ah my Jesus! I consent to be banished from the hearts and minds of all men, to be shut out from all communication with creatures, deprived of all the pleasures and good things of this life, on condition that I am not banished from Thy Heart, and that I am not in any way separated from Thee! What evil have I not to dread when I am without Thee? Without Thee, I should despise the delights of Paradise; with Thee, I should not fear the flames of hell.

PART THE SECOND.

EIGHT MEANS TO HELP US IN ACQUIRING THE
LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.



MEANS I.

OFTEN TO ASK FOR THIS LOVE.

THE first means of acquiring the love of our Lord Jesus Christ is to ask God for it often, or rather, continually. If we had a real desire of loving Jesus Christ, we should use scarcely any other prayer than this, which is by itself sufficient to make us perfect and happy. Thus some devout persons make every day three visits to the Blessed Sacrament, for this intention.

The first, in honour of the Eternal Father, to beg that He, Who so greatly desires us to love His Son, and Who sent Him into the world expressly for that

purpose, will teach us Himself how to love Him.

The second, in honour of the Son, to beg Him to kindle in our hearts that holy fire which He tells us He came to bring into the world, and with which He so passionately desires to inflame our hearts.

The third, in honour of the Holy Ghost, praying Him that, since our Lord Jesus Christ has promised to send us this Spirit to give testimony of Him,* He will make this testimony so present and efficacious on our minds and hearts, that so we may receive a perfect knowledge of Jesus, and so may learn to love Him perfectly. Those who wish to practise so easy and effectual a means, can make use of the three prayers to the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, which we have composed expressly for this purpose, and which will be found at the end of this book.

* St. John xv. 26.

MEANS II.

TO MEDITATE FREQUENTLY ON THE PERFECTIONS
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND ON HIS
BENEFITS TO US.

THE second means is to meditate often on the Greatness, Perfections, Mysteries, Maxims, Examples, in short, on all the actions and words of our Lord Jesus Christ. These should be nearly the only subjects of our meditation. It is, as Saint Teresa remarks, a dangerous mistake into which some Directors and some devout people fall, in an age too in which a tendency to over refinement prevails, when they suppose that the Sacred Person of our Lord Jesus Christ is not an object sufficiently elevated for the contemplation of some souls; as if there could be anything greater or more exalted than a Man-God. We should endeavour, for this purpose, to form a high conception of our Lord, to obtain as far as we are able the most perfect knowledge of Him. We should take for our general reading such

books as have best treated of Him, and which can give us the highest conception of Him, such as the Gospels, especially that St. John; St. Paul's Epistles; the Life of St. Teresa, written by herself; the works of that great servant of God, that man so full of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, Father Avila; the Glories of Jesus, by Cardinal Berulle; the first two books of the Knowledge of and Love of our Lord, by Father St. Jure; the Practice of the Love of God, by Father Huby; The Interior Christian; and many other works written on this subject with so much knowledge and unction.

MEANS III.

TO GO TO HOLY COMMUNION FOR THIS
INTENTION.

THE third, and undoubtedly the most efficacious means of acquiring the love of our Lord Jesus Christ is often to approach the Sacrament of the Adorable Eucharist

by frequent and devout Communion. I say by frequent Communion; for those who really wish to love Jesus Christ, since they ought to be detached from the world, or to have at least a sincere desire to be detached from it, should not go to Holy Communion more rarely than once a week, and should moreover endeavour to make themselves worthy of going more frequently. For there is no better way of showing their desire of loving Jesus, than by the ardent wish to use this most efficacious means of acquiring His love.

For, in the first place, the Blessed Sacrament is like a furnace of love, which we cannot ever approach in the right dispositions without being fully penetrated and inflamed with this Divine Fire, "like lions breathing forth flame," as St. Chrysostom says. Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is in fact, at the same time, the Cause, the Object, and the Motive of this love—a Cause most efficacious, an Object most powerful, and a Motive most stringent. Besides this, in the institution of the

Adorable Sacrament, the chief design of our Lord in coming into our hearts was to produce in them His love, as He testifies Himself by those words: "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me and I in him"*—that is, unites himself with Me by a very close union, and a very intimate love. "As I live by the Father," He says in another place, "so he that eateth Me the same also shall live by Me."†

Can we think that our Saviour will deceive us, or that He will be unfaithful in fulfilling His promises, if we on our part are faithful in bringing with us the requisite dispositions? Let us, then, go often to Holy Communion with an ardent desire, as well as with a perfect confidence, of obtaining a tender and sincere love for our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be assured that He will infallibly kindle in our hearts that divine Fire, which He came from Heaven to bring to us, and with which He desires to inflame the whole world.

* St. John vi. 57.

† *Ibid.*, vi. 58.

And we may say that the Eucharist is like a sacred hearth, where He preserves and cherishes this holy Fire till the consummation of all things, and that it is impossible to approach It, if we have the requisite dispositions, without being inflamed, or at least warmed by It—"I am come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled!"* We may say that if God is "a consuming Fire,"† as He is called in Scripture, it is most especially in the Blessed Sacrament that He deserves this title, and in It that He produces these results. And as we see that the sun, when its rays are collected and made more powerful by being concentrated in a mirror, acquires a more intense glow and has more force to burn up objects: so Jesus Christ by gathering together in the Eucharist all the ardour of His love, and bringing it home to us in the Sacramental Species, makes it, as it would seem, more intense and more able to kindle His love in our hearts, which, cold as they may appear,

* St. Luke xii. 49. † Deut. iv. 24.

can scarce resist its heat—"There is no one that can hide himself from His heat."*

MEANS IV.

TO HAVE JESUS CHRIST ALWAYS PRESENT.

THE fourth means of easily acquiring this love is to accustom ourselves to have our Lord Jesus Christ as much as possible always present to us. This may be done in three ways.

(1.) When we are about to do any action, we can represent to ourselves the manner in which Jesus Christ did it when on earth, the spirit with which He animated it, and the intention by which He elevated even those acts which seem the very lowest; and thus we can conform ourselves to them, and perform our action in a spirit of union with His.

(2.) By thinking of Him in Heaven, whence He ever looks down upon us, and

* Ps. xviii. 7.

pours forth incessantly His graces and favours over us, and inspires us with all the good emotions we have within us, being Himself the Head and we the members. Thus, there is no blessing, no grace, no good inspiration which we receive but from Him and by Him.

(3.) By accustoming ourselves to see the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ in our neighbour, as He commands us Himself, assuring us that what we do for our neighbour we do for Him.

Thus, servants in the person of their masters, children in the person of their parents, and wives in the person of their husbands should see Jesus Christ alone. And this is a practice from which many benefits flow.

For first, it cannot be carried out without their thinking often of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly, they will merit as much as if they had performed the service for Jesus Christ Himself.

Thirdly, they will perform their daily

actions with much greater facility and perfection.

Fourthly, they will avoid many mistakes, and annoyances, and outbursts of temper into which we fall from want of due attention to ourselves as well as to our Lord. This would not happen if we accustomed ourselves to see Him in the person with whom we are dealing.

MEANS V.

TO SPEAK OFTEN OF OUR LORD.

THE fifth means is to have a few pious and intimate friends with whom we can converse frequently of the greatness and the perfections of our Lord, and the infinite claims which He has upon our love. Nothing is more calculated to cherish and stir up His love in our hearts than such discourses, by which we may perhaps be more enkindled than we might be by prayer. And really, it is a pitiable thing that even those people who make profes-

sion of piety talk of a thousand needless topics and frivolous reports, of trifles and follies, while we scarcely ever find them speaking of God, or making the Sacred Person of our Lord Jesus Christ the subject of conversation. When we love any one passionately, we have the greatest difficulty in preventing ourselves from speaking of him. Would it not be the same with regard to our Lord if we loved Him, or even if we sincerely desired to love Him? We should also do our utmost, according to our state and condition, by our conversation, our prayers, and many little contrivances which active charity will suggest, to attract every one to this holy love.

MEANS VI.

TO INVOKE THOSE SAINTS WHO HAVE SPECIALLY
LOVED OUR LORD.

THE sixth means is to have a special devotion to those Saints who were brought into the closest relationship with the Sacred

Person of our Lord, such as the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, St. Anne, St. Joachim, and St. John Baptist ; or to such as loved Him with a specially tender and glowing love, as St. Peter, St. John the Evangelist, and St. Mary Magdalen. We should often invoke them, and pray to them to obtain for us a little of that love with which they were so ardently inflamed. Their Feasts should be kept with a particular devotion. I know indeed of some who have composed special litanies to these Saints, in order to beg from them a daily increase of this love.

They can be composed after this manner :

Most holy Virgin, whose love for thy Son was greater than the love of all creatures united, obtain for me His holy love.

St. Joseph, who didst show more love to Jesus than any other man, as thou didst render to Him more services than all others, obtain for me His holy love.

St. John the Baptist, who wast the first to make Jesus known and loved, obtain for me His holy love.

St. Peter, who didst thrice so solemnly

declare thy love for thy Divine Master, obtain for me His holy love.

St. John, who didst draw from the Heart of Jesus, on Which thou didst repose, the flames of that charity with which thou didst burn so intensely, obtain for me His holy love.

St. Mary Magdalen, who, according to the declaration of thy Divine Master, hadst loved Him much, obtain for me His holy love.

It is easy to follow out this plan with regard to other Saints.

MEANS VII.

THE USE OF EJACULATORY PRAYERS.

THE frequent practice of ejaculatory prayer has, at all times, been strongly recommended by the masters of the spiritual life. It was practised by all the Saints, and is still made use of by those who wish to advance in the way of perfection, and

aspire to that union with God which is the object of this practice. We may say also that it is especially useful in exciting the love of Jesus in us, and is one of the best means of making great progress in it in a short time.

These ejaculatory prayers are, at one and the same time, the most effectual causes, the most ordinary results, and the most palpable proofs of our love for Jesus. For some, they are as sparks which rekindle the heat of an expiring fire; for others, the fuel which serves to feed it. In regard of others, they are as the vehement blast which puts life into it—the sighs of the heart wounded with love which tries to give it vent; or at least, the interior sighing of a soul which loves, but does not love in proportion to its desires, and which mourns at not loving Jesus sufficiently. They are aspirations, which are to the soul what respiration is to the body, vivifying and refreshing it. They are like darts discharged from a burning heart, which go, so to speak, straight to the Heart of Jesus,

and return from It more ardent and capable of inflaming the heart from which they proceed. They are like so many links forming an invisible chain, which joins Heaven to earth, uniting the creature to God, and God to the creature. It is thus that David acquired that wonderful union with God of which we have such striking proofs in all the Psalms. And he declares that his respirations were not more frequent than his aspirations to God.*

It seems useless to attempt to teach the manner of making these ejaculatory prayers or to give examples of them, since it is not art but love which should teach us. It is not the brilliancy of an enlightened mind, but the fervour of a tender heart which should form them. Nevertheless, to assist beginners, and to make the practice of it easier to them, we will here suggest a few of those most likely to excite us to the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and which have been taken from Scripture, or from the writings of the Saints.

* Ps. cxviii. 131.

“I will rejoice in the Lord : and I will joy in God my Jesus.”*

“For what have I in Heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever.”†

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”‡

“For I judged not myself to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ; and Him crucified.”§

“I have suffered the loss of all things, that I may gain Christ.”||

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword?”¶

“Having a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.”**

“For to me, to live is Christ: and to die is gain.”††

* Hab. iii. 18.

† Ps. lxxii. 25, 26.

‡ Gal. vi. 14.

§ 1 Cor. ii. 2.

|| Phil. iii. 8.

¶ Rom. viii. 35.

** Phil. i. 23.

†† Phil. i. 21.

“And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me.”*

“With Christ I am nailed to the Cross.”†

“I love Thee, O Lord, but because I do not love Thee enough, make me love Thee more” (St. Augustine).

“Ah! Beauty ever ancient and ever new, how late have I begun to love Thee!” (St. Augustine).

“O Holy Fire, Who dost ever burn and art never extinguished, consume me” (St. Augustine).

“Thou dost command me, O Lord, to love Thee; give me grace to do what Thou commandest, and then command me whatever Thou wilt” (St. Augustine).

“My God and my All” (St. Francis).

* Gal. ii. 20.

† Gal. ii. 19.

MEANS VIII.

TO JOIN AN ASSOCIATION FORMED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASKING OF THE ETERNAL FATHER THE LOVE OF HIS SON, AND CONFORMITY OF HEART WITH HIM.

I.—What is the design and aim of this Association.

THE eighth and last means is to join an Association formed for the purpose of begging constantly the Eternal Father to produce and increase in us the knowledge and love of His Only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and conformity of heart with Him, first, in the hearts of those who belong to this Association; secondly, in the hearts of all the just; and lastly, in the hearts of all sinners and unbelievers. It was St. Teresa, so full of love towards Jesus Christ, who being deeply affected by man's indifference to Jesus Christ, and seeing Him so little known, or honoured, or loved, was the first to form and propose this design. As she however was not able to carry it out, two great servants of God, Father Gaudier and Father Saint Jure,

were inspired a few years ago to put it in practice, and give it shape. But as it was only sketched out, I hoped to contribute something to the glory of Jesus Christ, to the consolation of those who are desirous of loving Him, and to the edification of the faithful, if I were to put the last touch to the execution of so great and beautiful a design. This I did some years ago, when I published a book entitled *Association for entreating the Love of our Lord*, obtaining at the same time a Bull of Innocent XI., of happy memory, which confirmed this Association, and granted it some Indulgences, that may be found at the end of the book.

In that book I gave a few exercises, together with some general and particular rules for the Association; and as they may assist towards the increase of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ in the hearts of the Faithful, I have considered it advisable to placè them here.

II.—The manner of entering the Association.

(1.) Those who have a true desire of acquiring the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, and who wish to join the Association, need not go through any ceremony for the purpose. It is sufficient to have the intention of devoting themselves to it, and uniting themselves in heart and mind with those who already belong to it.

(2.) After having decided upon this, they must choose a day of Communion for consecrating themselves, by a special devotion, to the Sacred Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The best time for this act will be immediately after having received the Body of our Lord, when, prostrating themselves in spirit at His Feet with sentiments of lively faith, deep humility, and tender and reverent love, and uniting themselves in heart and mind with all those who belong to the holy Association, with the Saints on Earth and in Purgatory, and with the Blessed in Heaven, they should use the Form which will be found after these

rules, for the entire consecration of themselves to the love of Jesus Christ.

(3.) After this, each day during the ensuing week they should take for the subject of their meditation one of the Motives for loving our Lord, so that they may learn to know Jesus Christ, and the infinite obligations we are under to Him, and may have a strong desire of sincerely and ardently loving Him.

CONSECRATION OF THE HEART TO THE LOVE OF
JESUS.

O JESUS, Only Son of God, my God, my Creator, and my Saviour, I prostrate myself at Thy Feet with sentiments of the humblest and tenderest gratitude of which a creature is capable, in the presence of the Holy Trinity, of Thy Blessed Mother, of my Guardian Angel, and of all those Saints who were brought into an especial relation with Thee, or had a special love for Thee; that I may offer homage to Thy Sovereign Majesty, fulfil my duty, and acknowledge my infinite obligations to

Thee. I offer and consecrate myself to Thee by a special devotion, that I may apply myself solely to know, love, and imitate Thee, that henceforth Thou mayest be the God of my heart, my Love, and my All ; that I may love none but Thee ; desire none but Thee ; seek none but Thee ; and live and die but in Thee and for Thee ; that I may be all Thine, and Thou everything to me ; that Thou mayest be my Possession, my Life, my Repose, my Joy, my Glory, and my sole and sovereign Happiness. To this end, I unite myself in a holy alliance with all the souls whom I believe to have the same intention of loving Thee alone, in whatever part of the earth they may be, and I also unite myself with the Blessed who are in Heaven, in order that I may join with them in exercising this holy love, and in doing my utmost, in every way I can, to increase it in all hearts. So that, being united on earth by the bond of Thy Divine Love, this same love may one day unite us in Heaven, that we may possess Thee, to praise Thee, to

bless Thee, and to love Thee for ever and ever. Amen.

III.—General Rules by which the Associates should form their conduct.

(1.) After having thus devoted and consecrated themselves to the Sacred Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, they should consider themselves in future as changed men, as new men, men who no longer are their own, but Jesus Christ's, to Whom they are entirely consecrated: "You are not your own,"* as St. Paul says. So that all their talents should be employed solely for Him. He should be the Beginning and End of all their emotions and desires, of which they cannot apply the smallest to the use of creatures, without an act of robbery, without a kind of sacrilege; so that, as St. Paul says—"They also who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto Him Who died for them."†

(2.) In order that the Associates may live for Jesus Christ and be animated by

* 1 Cor. vi. 19.

† 2 Cor. v. 15.

His Spirit, they should constantly strive to destroy in themselves the spirit of the world, that spirit which is so contrary to the Spirit of Jesus Christ. They should accustom themselves to look on the world as their greatest enemy, because it is the enemy of Jesus Christ. They ought, then, to impress well on their minds, that when once they have pledged themselves to the Association, and have once decided to belong to Jesus Christ, they must endeavour to renounce the world, despise its favours, hate its maxims, and detest its ways. They must be fully convinced that they can have no attachment to it, without being cowardly deserters, and making themselves guilty of the darkest perfidy.

(3.) It is not enough to endeavour to renounce and to die to the world: they must also endeavour to die continually to themselves, to their likings, their passions, their unruly desires, and to all human movements and natural inclinations, that by these means they may aspire to that state which St. Paul reached when He said it was no

longer he, but Jesus Christ Who lived in him. To this end they should often have in their hearts and on their lips that ejaculatory prayer of a Saint—"My Jesus, let me die completely to myself, that I may live only for Thee!"

(4.) To assist themselves to real success in this great design, the Associates should apply themselves to the study and knowledge of Jesus Christ, as being their principal, or rather their only, occupation. They should be constantly thinking of Him, always contemplating the Greatness and the Infinite Perfections of this God-Man. They should diligently meditate His Words, His Maxims, His Mysteries, His Virtues, His Actions, and His Example. They should have constantly before their eyes, His Merits, His Benefits, His Kindnesses, and all the infinite obligations He has laid upon us; and especially they must take care not only to attend to the exterior, but also endeavour to enter into the interior Spirit of Jesus Christ, and the great motives which influenced Him. Let these things

be the most ordinary subjects for the reading, meditations, discourses, and ejaculatory prayers of the Associates; for, by being often meditated upon and thoroughly penetrated, they will give a grand conception and a high estimation of the Sacred Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of all that appertains to Him. This high estimation will give birth to a solid, enlightened, and constant love. This love will naturally produce a great desire of imitating Jesus Christ, and of putting on Jesus Christ, as the Apostle says; from this desire will grow an entire conformity of heart and mind with Him; and this conformity will infallibly effect that intimate union with Jesus Christ in which consists the happiness and highest perfection of a Christian.

(5.) The Associates must not be content with loving and knowing Jesus Christ for themselves only. If they love Him sincerely, their love will make them burn with a great zeal that He may be known and loved by others. Preachers should endeavour to do this by their sermons;

Directors, by their guidance ; others, by their conversation ; and those who have not the talent to assist in this way, may help by their prayers. And above all, they must try to induce all those to join the Association, who they think are likely to profit by it : such, for example, as are not infatuated with the spirit of the world, otherwise they would not be suited to the Association, unless indeed they have a sincere desire to strive to detach themselves from the world.

(6.) All the Associates should if possible wear a Crucifix, and strengthen themselves by the sight of it against outbreaks of temper and passion, against the allurements of pleasure, occasions of sin, the vain suggestions of the world, and the temptations of the flesh and the devil. Sometimes they will look on it with love ; at others, press it tenderly to their hearts, especially when they feel their heart inclined to give way to some undisciplined emotion ; at others they will reverently and tenderly kiss it. Above all, they must never let

a day pass without making some little sacrifice for Him Whom it represents.

(7.) All the Associates must have a great charity for one another, must assist each other in their needs, console each other in their afflictions, pray to God often for one another, and stimulate each other by frequent conversations on the love of Jesus Christ; imitating the Seraphim of the Mercy Seat, who animate and excite one another by the beating of their wings. They must not forget in their prayers the holy souls in Purgatory, who long so ardently to see Jesus Christ. When they hear of the death of an Associate they should assist him by their prayers. Lastly, they must consider themselves as brothers and sisters united in the Heart of Jesus Christ, Who is the Centre of Divine Love, and of this Association.

Neither these rules nor those which follow bind under pain of sin. Nevertheless, it may be said that progress in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ depends very much on the exactness with which they

are kept, and the fidelity with which these means are practised. "Whosoever shall follow this rule, peace be on them."*

IV.—What is to be done every day.

(1.) At our morning prayer we must ask the Eternal Father to plant or increase in our hearts, and in the hearts of the Associates, and of all mankind, Christians or unbelievers, just or unjust, the knowledge and love of His Son Jesus Christ our Saviour, and conformity of heart and mind with Him.

(2.) The same prayer should be made at Mass, at the Elevation, and at the time of Holy Communion, whether Spiritual or Sacramental; and again before going to bed at night, after our examination of conscience. The following prayer can be used for the purpose.

PRAYER FOR OBTAINING HOLY LOVE, TO BE SAID
DAILY BY THE ASSOCIATES FOR ONE ANOTHER.

(1.) O JESUS, the Only Son of God and our Sovereign Lord, Who by an infinite

* Gal. vi. 16.

excess of goodness and love hast been pleased to clothe Thyself with our flesh and make Thyself like unto us in all things, that Thou mightest show forth in us the riches of Thy Grace and of Thy Glory ; we earnestly beseech Thee, for ourselves and for those united to us in a special bond for the purpose of loving and imitating Thee, to vouchsafe us the favour of uniting Thyself to us by the inseparable bond of Thy Divine Charity, and by a perfect conformity of our hearts and minds to Thee. To this end destroy in us the spirit of the world, and replenish us with Thy Holy Spirit, that He may make us live by Thy Divine Life, that being dead to ourselves we may live only to Thee, O Lord, who didst condescend to die for us; and that we may all together acknowledge Thee eternally as our Redeemer, praise and honour Thee as our Sovereign Lord, adore and love Thee as our God : Who livest and reignest, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.

(2.) The Litany of the Holy Name of

Jesus is to be said for the same intention. Those who cannot read, instead of the Litany of the Holy Name, may say five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys in honour of the Five Wounds of our Lord.

(3.) No day should pass without our doing, for this intention, some good work or act of mortification either interior or exterior. We must endeavour to perform our actions in a spirit of union with those of Jesus Christ, looking on Him, not simply as the only object of our love, but also as the only Model upon which we are to form ourselves. So that each of our actions may be, as it were, another touch which we add to finish this Divine Likeness in us.

(4.) Those who have more leisure, and are masters of their time and occupations, can profitably make use of an exercise which some holy persons have adopted for obtaining the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and from which they have derived great fruit. It is to make daily three visits to the Blessed Sacrament, in honour of the Most Holy Trinity, to ask of each Person the

perfection of this holy love. To assist such as desire to practise this, we here add three prayers to the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity asking for this holy love. They will be the more efficacious before God and likely to strengthen our confidence, in as much as they are almost entirely taken from Scripture, especially from the Gospel of St. John and the Epistles of St. Paul.

PRAYER TO THE ETERNAL FATHER TO ASK FOR LOVE
OF HIS SON.

Almighty and Eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the same sentiments of love and gratitude with which I thank Thee for having so loved the world as to give us Thy Son, through Whom we may have access to Thee, I now beseech Thee to accomplish the promise Thou didst make to Him, of giving Him all nations for an inheritance, and to reward Him for the sacrifice He made to Thee of His Life and His Blood by giving Him a numerous posterity. Draw us then to Him, O Lord, by the power of Thy grace ;

glorify Him in us, as He has glorified Thee in Himself. Grant that our Divine Saviour may live always in our hearts by lively faith, sincere charity, and the perfect conformity of our hearts and minds to Him. Strengthen and enlighten the eyes of our mind that we may fully understand how lofty are the hopes of His vocation in us, what are the riches of His glory which He has prepared for His Saints, and what the extent of the force and greatness of His might, that so we may love Him as Thou hast loved Him, and that as Thou hast put everything in subjection to His Power, so also there may be nothing in us which is not wholly consecrated and perfectly subjected to Him, as our God, as our King, as our Head, and that He may reign over us in Time and in Eternity.

PRAYER TO THE SON TO BEG OF HIM HIS HOLY LOVE.

O most lovely and adorable Jesus, my God and my Saviour, from Whom proceed all the blessings I have or that I hope to have; Thou Who art the Light of the

World, the Only and Infallible Way which leads to Thy Father, the Truth which saves us from lies and delivers us from error, the Gate, by which he who enters shall be saved, the Source of Life, Who hast made known to the world that life of heavenly love, which was hidden from all Eternity in the Bosom of Thy Father, by making to shine forth in Thyself all the riches of the Goodness and Mercy of God, till then unknown to mankind : accomplish Thy Joy in us, as Thou hast promised, by making us and all men serve to the advancement of Thy Glory and the increase of Thy Holy Love. Shed on us, to this end, that Heavenly Light, which Thou camest to bring on earth, that the love which Thy Father hath for Thee may be in us, as Thou, by Thy Holy Word, hast made us to hope ; and, as He is in Thee, as He is but One with Thee, so may we be but one with Thee by a perfect conformity of life and manners ; so that we may have nothing in us which is not wholly subject and entirely devoted to Thee, and

being dead to the world, the flesh, and ourselves by an entire renouncement of all but Thee, we may henceforth live for Thee, Who livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY GHOST TO BEG OF HIM THE
LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

O Holy Ghost, All powerful God, Eternal Love of the Adorable Trinity, Sacred Fire that unitest the Father with the Son, Who proceeding from them both, hast also been sent by both into the world to glorify Jesus Christ and to give testimony of Him, so that no one can know Him without Thee, nor pronounce the Name of Jesus, as they ought, without Thy aid: we beseech Thee to accomplish in us this great design, for which Thou wast sent, by giving this testimony to us in heart and spirit, the witness that Jesus Christ is our God, our Master, and our Saviour, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, that He came to reveal to us in Time those ineffable mysteries hidden from all Eternity in the

Bosom of the Father, and to communicate to us all the treasures of the Divinity, which till then He had retained in Himself. Pour down on us Thy Heavenly Unction to sweeten the seeming hardships of His holy yoke, that we may take delight in His maxims, understand His mysteries, follow faithfully His guidance, enter into the designs of His wisdom and of His mercy to us ; lastly, that we may attach ourselves to Him solely and constantly by that sincere and generous love which Thou alone canst produce in our hearts.

It is Thine, O Holy Spirit, to make us ask this favour by those secret and ineffable groanings of which Thou art the author ; and it is Thine also to grant it us, for Thou art the Author of all gifts, that as it is by Thee that the Father is united to the Son and the Son to the Father, so also it may be by Thee that He is united to us and we to him for ever and ever. Amen.

V.—What is to be done every Month.

(1.) A fixed day should be chosen in each Month, when the Associates are to communicate for this intention, and beg the Eternal Father with redoubled fervour for the increase of knowledge and love of His Son, and conformity of heart and mind with Him.

(2.) When they have received the Body of our Lord, they should prostrate themselves in spirit at His Feet, and renew the consecration by which they bound themselves to the Association.

(3.) On this day they should spend half an hour, or at least a quarter of an hour, before the Blessed Sacrament, partly to pray for the increase of this love, partly to meditate on the Greatness and Perfection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the obligations under which we lie to Him, and the mysteries of His Life and Death.

(4.) They should endeavour on this day to read some book which treats of the love or imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(5.) If they can do it conveniently, they should also endeavour to pay a visit to some poor persons ashamed to appear so, or to prisoners, or to sick persons, in order thus to do honour to Jesus Christ in His members.

VI.—What is to be done every Year.

(1.) Two Feasts should be chosen for the more solemn renewal of the Consecration by which we are bound to the pious Association. These should be, that of the Nativity of our Lord, and that of His Transfiguration, which the Associates should honour with a special devotion, as being the two Feasts when the Eternal Father made known His Son to the world and to His disciples, and offered Him as the Object of their adoration, their love, and their imitation.

(2.) They must endeavour, on the eves of these two Feasts, to prepare themselves by some mortification or work of mercy, and above all by retirement : giving more time to prayer, and occupying themselves

on that day, whether in prayer or reading, only with the Greatness and Perfection of the Word Incarnate, the infinite obligations we owe Him, and the special promise we have made to love Him and imitate Him.

To assist persons in this holy exercise, during the Octave of the Nativity they can take for their meditation the devotions proper for the season, which they will find in the book called *Interior Exercises*. During the Octave of the Transfiguration the Eight Motives for the Love of Jesus, which form the matter of the First Part of this book, can be used.

USEFUL HINTS FOR THOSE WHO LOVE GOD, AND WHO
DESIRE TO GROW IN HIS LOVE.

(I.) You have given and devoted yourself to God in all the fulness of your heart: never cease to ratify this offering. Consecrate to Him continually all your thoughts, all your affections, and all your actions. Often tell Him that you wish your mind to be occupied with Him alone, and with

those things which He wills you to think of; that you wish your heart to love none but Him, and your brethren only in Him, according to the rule of charity; that you wish all you do and all you suffer to be offered to him; that you wish the end of your actions to be His glory and good pleasure. Tell Him that you rejoice at being no longer your own but His, that you will never cease to place your liberty in His Hands, to direct it, and to do what He wills with it.

Give yourself unreservedly to God, the Author and Preserver of your being, Who has done you nothing but good, and Who desires to make you eternally happy. You have only the present moment at your disposal. It is only in giving yourself entirely to God that you can glorify Him, sanctify yourself, and fulfil as He requires the great precept of loving Him. The example of Jesus Christ makes this complete and irrevocable offering a law for you. In this gift of yourself to God consists that renunciation which is com-

manded in the Gospel. It is by this that you really merit the title of child of God, and have a moral certainty of your salvation ; it is by this that you dry up the spring of the reproaches of conscience ; it is by this that you obtain peace of soul, the gift of prayer, and a great familiarity with God ; and it is by this that you will enter into the way of holiness.

Give yourself to God with all the love of which you are capable during the short time you are in this life. He intends to give Himself to you with an infinite love for eternity.

(2.) Serve Jesus through love. Let love guide you in everything. Let love be your only spring of action. Fear is the beginning of wisdom ; you ought to fear, but let your fear be a filial fear. Fear to displease God because He is your Father. Hope is a virtue ; you ought to hope. Desire and confidently expect to receive Heaven from the goodness of God, through the merits of your Saviour, and thus to be forced certainly and necessarily to love

God with all your strength through all eternity.

He who serves God through love sees God everywhere, and He sees Him everywhere only to love Him. It is especially by this practice that we glorify and please God, that we are more quickly and thoroughly purified, that we make ourselves worthy of the favours of the Almighty, and that we heap up rich treasures in Heaven.

How sweet it is to serve God through love! He who serves Him thus, dearly loves the will of God, and desires to know it that He may fulfil it, and when he knows it he executes it with promptitude. He is tenderly loved by God, Who is Peace, and so he possesses peace which passeth all understanding. His heart is filled with a pure, deep, unchangeable joy, a joy which is a foretaste of that which inundates the souls of the Blessed.

To serve God through love is not difficult. He gave us a heart, that we might love Him, and He alone is infinitely loveable.

If, with the intention of pleasing Him, and by the constant consideration of His amiable qualities you excite yourself to a pure love of Him, will He refuse you when you ask earnestly for the graces you require for His service ?

(3.) Order leads to God. He who faithfully observes for the love of God a good rule of life, in a manner that pleases Him, will daily advance in His knowledge and love. Here follows a kind of rule of life, the observing of which may be very useful to you.

Have a fixed time for rising, for meals, religious exercises, employments, and for repose. Never alter these unless necessity or charity demand it.

Do all for the greater glory of God.

Never conform yourself to the world. You must look on it as the enemy of Jesus Christ and your enemy. Do not make friendship with those who allow themselves to be dazzled by its vanities, and who follow its false pleasures.

PRAYERS.

ACT OF REPARATION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

O ADORABLE Heart of my Saviour and my God! penetrated with a lively sorrow at the sight of the insults which Thou hast received, and still dost daily receive, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, I here prostrate myself to make reparation to Thee at the foot of Thy Altar. Oh! that I might by my homage and devotion make amends to Thee for Thy neglected Majesty! Oh! that I might efface by my tears and my blood all the numberless acts of irreverence, profanation, and sacrilege! How well my life would be spent if I might give it for such an object! Grant the pardon which I beg of Thee, O my God, for all the numberless heretics who dishonour Thee. Pardon me, too, especially, who have so often insulted Thee. Remember that in carrying the weight of my sins Thy Adorable Heart was afflicted even

unto death. Permit not that Thy sufferings and Thy Blood should be profitless to me. Destroy my heart of wickedness and give me one like Thine, a contrite humble heart, a pure and spotless heart, a heart which for the future shall be nothing but a victim devoted to Thy glory, and burning with the Sacred Fire of Thy Love. On my part I promise that by the modesty of my behaviour in church, by my assiduity in visiting Thee, by my devotion and fervour in receiving Thee, to make reparation for all the irreverences and sacrileges which I deplore in the bitterness of my heart. To make my adoration and devotion more pleasing to Thee, I unite them to those of the Angels and the Blessed Spirits who are prostrate at the foot of Thy Tabernacles, and who weep bitterly in Thy Presence. Hear our prayers, O my God! and reject not a sinner who returns to Thee with the desire of being all Thine for ever. Amen.

PRAYER TO THE SACRED HEART OF MARY.

O SACRED Heart of Mary! ever Virgin, and Immaculate in thy most holy Conception, Heart the holiest, the purest, the most perfect, the most noble, the greatest which the Hand of the Almighty Creator has ever formed in a pure creature, Heart the unfailing source of grace, of goodness, of sweetness, of mercy, and of love, model of all virtues, perfect likeness of the Adorable Heart of Jesus Christ, Heart ever on fire with the most ardent charity; who by thyself hast loved God more than the Seraphim, more than all the Angels and Saints united, who hast given more glory to the Blessed Trinity by the least of thy actions than has been given or could have been given by all other creatures by the most heroic of theirs, Heart of the Mother of our Redeemer, who hast felt so keenly our miseries, who hast suffered so much for our salvation, who hast loved us so ardently and tenderly, and who dost merit in every possible way the love and

veneration, the gratitude and confidence of all mankind, deign to receive my feeble homage and devotion.

Prostrate before thee, O Sacred Heart of the Mother of Mercy, I offer thee the profoundest homage due to thee. I thank thee for all the mercy and love with which thou hast been and still art touched at the sight of my misery. I thank thee for all the favours which I have received from thy motherly goodness. I unite myself to all those pure souls who find their delight and consolation in honouring, praising, and loving thee; for they have learnt from the Holy Spirit, Who guides them, that it is through thee that we must go to Jesus Christ, and through thee that we are to pay this Man-God all the service that we owe to Him.

Thou then, O Heart worthy of all love! thou shalt be, after the Heart of thy dear and Divine Son, the object of my veneration, my love, and my most tender devotion. Thou shalt be the way by which I approach my Saviour, and by Thee I shall receive

His graces and mercies. Thou shalt be my Refuge in my afflictions, my Consolation in my troubles, my Help in all my needs. I will come to thee to learn Purity, Humility, Sweetness, and especially Love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ thy Son. I will ask these virtues through thy merits; and thus I hope to obtain them, and, with them, the pardon of my sins, and the gift of final perseverance. Amen.

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